

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF  
HEALTH STRATEGIES COUNCIL**

Department of Community Health, Division of Health Planning  
Southside Medical Center, 1046 Ridge Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30315

**Friday, August 22, 2003**

■  
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

**Daniel W. Rahn, M.D., Chair, Presiding**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

William G. "Buck" Baker, Jr., MD  
Honorable Glenda M. Battle, RN, BSN  
David Bedell, DVM  
Edward J. Bonn, CHE  
Elizabeth Brock  
Nelson B. Conger, DMD  
Tary Brown  
W. Clay Campbell  
Katie B. Foster  
Reverend Ike E. Mack  
Felix Maher, DMD  
Julia L. Mikell, MD  
James G. Peak  
Raymer Martin Sale, Jr.  
Toby D. Sidman  
Catherine Slade  
Oscar S. Spivey, MD  
Tracy M. Strickland  
Kurt M. Stuenkel, FACHE  
Katherine L. Wetherbee  
David M. Williams, MD

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Armando Basarrate, Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs  
Charlotte W. Bedell, Tift County Commissioner  
Valerie Hepburn, GSU/Public Health Institute  
Jon Howell, GA Nursing Home Association  
Savannah Potter, Esq., Georgia Association for Women Lawyers  
Clyde Reese, III, Esq., Meadows & Lewis, P.C.  
Karen Waters, Georgia Hospital Association

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Anthony J. Braswell  
Harve R. Bauguess  
Charlene M. Hanson, Ed.D., FNP  
Sonia Kuniansky  
Honorable Evelyn Turner-Pugh

**STAFF PRESENT**

Commissioner Tim Burgess  
Richard Greene, Esq.  
Jamillah McDaniel  
Stephanie Taylor

## **WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Rahn called the meeting of the Health Strategies Council (Council) to order at 11:10 am. He recognized Valerie Hepburn, former Director, Division of Health Planning and publicly acknowledged and thanked her for her contribution to the Department of Community Health and to the State of Georgia. He said that Ms. Hepburn is well known for, among other things, her unbiased approach to planning, her knowledge of a wide array of issues and her effective communication and leadership skills. He and the Council wished her well in all future endeavors.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2003**

Dr. Rahn called on the Council for a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting. A motion to accept the minutes of May 23, 2003 was made by Jim Peak, seconded by Katie Foster.

Following approval of the minutes, Dr. Rahn recognized Clyde Reese, III, Esq., former General Counsel, Department of Community Health. He said that Mr. Reese has provided legal guidance to the Division of Health Planning for over seven years and to the Department for approximately three years. His guidance has been invaluable. Mr. Reese recently left the Department to pursue other professional opportunities. Dr. Rahn publicly acknowledged Mr. Reese's contributions and thanked him for his years of service, including his involvement with the Health Strategies Council.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Dr. Rahn welcomed Tim Burgess, Commissioner, Department of Community Health to the Council meeting and called on Council members to introduce themselves. Following Council member introductions, Dr. Rahn introduced Mr. Burgess to the Council and guests. He recognized his extensive background in public administration including his work with several state agencies including, the Department of Motor Vehicles, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia, Athens and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

Commissioner Burgess thanked Dr. Rahn for the opportunity to meet with the Council. He said that there are several pressing issues that he is handling at present, including seeking a replacement for the General Counsel position, working with Richard Greene to ensure a smooth transition to the Division of Health Planning and addressing some of the Department's budgetary challenges. Mr. Burgess said that among the most pressing issues facing the Department is the significant budget shortfalls and resultant impact on the state's Medicaid budget. He said that he would like to engage the Health Strategies Council as a public policy forum for discussions and debate about Medicaid Reform. He said that the Council may be poised to collect data, assure public involvement and provide invaluable input into discussions surrounding Medicaid.

Dr. Conger addressed the issue of decreases in Medicaid reimbursement for dentists and asked about the state's level of commitment to the field of dentistry. The Commissioner recognized Dr. Conger's concern and indicated that all areas of the budget are being evaluated by the Governor's office at this time. Further, Commissioner Burgess said that he is sensitive to the many issues that have continued to plague the Division of Medical Assistance, including reimbursement and claims payment processes. He said that he is working to resolve these issues and is committed to finding an appropriate resolution to the Multi-Health Network (MHN) Implementation System problems that have been identified.

Dr. Rahn stated that the Council is committed the offering assistance in all of these areas and is particularly excited about the Council's involvement in Medicaid policy discussions.

## **PRESENTATION FROM THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE**

Dr. Rahn called on David Williams, M.D., Health Strategies Council member and CEO of Southside Medical Center to present information about community health centers and to provide an overview of Southside Medical Center. A copy of Dr. William's slide presentation is attached to the minutes as Appendix A. Following the presentation Tary Brown and Dr. Williams responded to several questions. Brochures and other handout materials were provided to the Council and guests.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

In his report to the Council Dr. Rahn indicated that the University System anticipates some budget reductions during this year and next year. He noted that the Governor has called for a 2.5% reduction of the current budget. The University system is developing ways to operate more strategically, given these challenges. He said that the University is affected by budget reductions and is grappling with the question of how to maintain the highest quality of education amidst financial constraints. He noted that there has been some positive gains in the system including the following: fifteen percent (15%) increase in enrollment across all schools, with the exception of the school of medicine; fifteen percent (15%) increase in clinical volume and a twenty-two percent (22%) patient volume increase over the past two years. Also, he mentioned that the University System has been able to upgrade its infrastructure to better serve the needs of cancer patients, including obtaining new PET/CT equipment. Dr. Rahn was pleased to announce that the University System has received enhanced funding from the National Institute of Health. He emphasized that overall it has been a good year at the Medical College of Georgia.

Dr. Rahn provided an update of the work of the Georgia Dental Task Force of the Medical College of Georgia. He said that the Dental Task Force consisted of 13 members that were recommended by various leaders in government, education, and dental practice. Ms. Margaret Taylor, former Deputy to the Senior Vice Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, served as chairperson of the task force.

The specific issues addressed by the group related to the adequacy of the School of Dentistry's class size, number of dental specialty residency positions, and faculty needs to meet the current and future oral health care needs of the state. The task force also examined how the Medical College of Georgia can address critical access issues to appropriate dental care across the state. The task force met four times over a 6-month period and communicated with the chairperson and President's Office staff regularly to identify data and information needs of the group. Since many participants were unfamiliar with the facilities of the dental school, the group was given a tour of the dentistry building and facilities at the second meeting. The tour was followed by an open forum in which MCG dental faculty was given the opportunity to express their concerns about the future of the School of Dentistry. The task force presented its findings and recommendations to President Rahn and Dean Drisko in a report submitted in June. The final report included twenty-eight recommendations, many of which encouraged collaborative initiatives with the Georgia Dental Association, Georgia Dental Society, dental board, and Area Health Education Centers (AHECs).

The recommendations addressed a variety of issues and were clustered around the following major themes:

- Growing and diversifying the dentistry workforce through increased class size, enhanced graduate dental education opportunities, and aggressive marketing of the profession;

- Improving access to care by emphasizing dental school applicants' proclivity to practice in underserved areas during the admissions process, strengthening alliances with communities lacking adequate oral health services, and identifying resources to provide incentives for dental graduates to practice in underserved areas and to sponsor dental outreach programs;
- Addressing faculty shortages by promoting academic dentistry to students (undergraduate and dental), residents, and practitioners and elevating faculty satisfaction through development/mentorship and enhancement of the practice environment and practice plan.

Dr. Rahn called on Dr. Maher to provide additional comments concerning the work of the Task Force. Dr. Maher said that he does not support all of the recommendations of the MCG Dental Task Force and that he did not find the Task Force useful in addressing the current crisis in dental education nationwide as it related to the Medical College of Georgia/School of Dentistry and ultimately to the citizens of the state. Further, he said that the American Association of Dental Schools and the American Dental Association has identified three issues affecting dental education today, including cost of dental education, student indebtedness and faculty shortages. He said that, in his opinion nothing could be done to solve these problems without appropriate funding. This was an area that he feels was not adequately addressed in the task force's deliberations. Dr. Rahn thanked Dr. Maher for his insights and noted that both Dr. Maher and Dr. Conger participated on the Task Force.

## **DEPARTMENT AND DIVISION UPDATE**

Dr. Rahn called on Valerie Hepburn, former Director of the Division of Health Planning, to provide an update on Department and Division activities. Ms. Hepburn indicated that the volume of CON applications have increased exponentially during 2003; more CON applications have been submitted through August 2003 than was submitted for the entire 2002 calendar year. She said that while the number of applications has increased, the staff of the Regulatory Review Section has been decreasing. In the recent past, two reviewers have left the Department. Simultaneously, the number of Appeals and Hearings also has increased. Compounding the departures in the regulatory review section, Jamillah McDaniel, Research Analyst, from the Division of Health Planning also has recently departed. These changes have been enormously challenging for the Department.

Ms. Hepburn said that, like many other states, Georgia is facing some financial challenges, including declining revenues and budget deficits. She said that the Office of Planning and Budget has reported budget deficits which are impacting the FY2004 budget and FY2005 revenue estimates and the budget development process. Each state agency, department, division and authority has been instructed to identify 2.5% of its FY2004 appropriation for probable reduction and an additional 5.0% of the FY2005 appropriated amount for possible further reduction.

Ms. Hepburn said that while the Department is facing some challenges, there are some key areas in the Division which are in excellent shape including, survey data. Additionally, the indigent care shortfalls are expected to be collected in the near future. This revenue will be placed in the Indigent Care Trust Fund. She further mentioned that the General Counsel for the Department is expected to be named shortly and transition in leadership for the Division of Health Planning has been seamless, given the appointment of Richard Greene. She said that Mr. Greene has great familiarity with CON and has both legal and other healthcare experience, which makes him an excellent candidate for the position. She introduced Mr. Greene and asked him to briefly introduce himself to the Council and guests. Mr. Greene indicated that he is an

attorney with 12 years experience in private practice and with extensive familiarity with the Certificate of Need (CON) laws of the State of Georgia. He served as a member of the Georgia State Senate and was involved in drafting the 1984 revisions to the CON statutes for the State of Georgia. He was very involved in health care legislation, including authorizing the first outpatient care bill in the United States. Also, he is a former Administrative Law Judge and most recently worked as Assistant to the Chief Financial Officer, Governor Purdue. Mr. Greene said that he looks forward to the challenge of working for the Department.

## **REPORT FROM THE AMBULATORY SURGICAL SERVICES TAC**

Dr. Rahn called on Dr. Baker to provide a report of the work of the Ambulatory Surgical Services TAC. Dr. Baker indicated that to-date, the TAC held three meetings and a public forum. The public forum was held at Coliseum Medical Center in Macon. He publicly thanked Coliseum Medical Center and members of the TAC who attended the forum, noting that close to 30 persons were in attendance, 9 of whom provided public comment.

He said that all of the comments that were received regarding the draft guidelines were distributed to the entire TAC and will serve as the outline to finalize the draft guidelines. He said that the TAC expects to complete its work in two additional meetings. The plan is expected to be presented to the Council for action at its next meeting in November and if approved, would be sent to the Board of Community Health for issuance for 30-day public comment. The Ambulatory Surgical Services Plan and Rules would likely not be implemented until late February early March 2004.

## **PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR FY2004**

Dr. Rahn and Division staff confirmed that a draft of the Council's annual report would be available at the next Council meeting. Valerie Hepburn mentioned that the Annual Report of the Health Workforce Policy Advisory Committee is nearing completion and also would be available to the Council at the next meeting. Further, Ms. Hepburn said that the Specialized Cardiovascular Services TAC is slated to be reconvened during 2004. The committee has been awaiting any revised guidelines from the American College of Cardiology and would not be expected to meet until such guidelines have been issued.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting of the Health Strategies Council is scheduled for **Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003** at Memorial Hospital and Manor in Bainbridge, GA. Some members expressed concern about the location of the meeting noting that it should be held in a more central location.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm. Health Strategies Council members and guests were invited to attend a brief tour of Southside Medical Center.

Minutes taken on behalf of Chair by Stephanie Taylor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel W. Rahn, M.D., Chair

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**APPENDIX A**

**SLIDE PRESENTATION  
SOUTHSIDE MEDICAL CENTER**

(can be obtained by contacting the Division of Health Planning at 404-656-0655)